

What To Do, With What We Don't Want

The SOUTH HOISINGTON Project

Pan shot of dump area

VO:

Illegal dumping.

It's been going on for decades.

Even though there are designated solid waste disposal sites in every county, some individuals disregard the law and illegally dump their waste - for convenience - or, to save a few dollars....

The result is environmental degradation, risks to human and animal health,.....and aesthetic impacts.

Over 200 illegal dump sites have been identified since the year 2000, when the Kansas Department of Health and Environment was directed by Legislative action to implement an illegal dump enforcement and clean-up program.

Working with local governments, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment's - Bureau of Waste Management cleans-up these sites, eliminating the associated risks and community eyesores.

By restoring these areas to a clean and natural condition, the illegal dump program is an important part of the '*Kansas, Don't Spoil It*' initiative.

In some cases, illegal dumping has had a link to Kansas History, and the results have impacted the cultural heritage of some communities.

This is where the story of the **largest identified illegal dumping grounds in Kansas** begins.

VO:

African Americans played a significant role in our Kansas history.

Still shots of a 'Buffalo Soldiers'

A decade after the Civil War, an estimated twenty thousand migrated from southern states to Kansas.

Slow pan of map from the South (Kentucky) to Kansas ending on Nicodemus, KS.

This migration became known as 'The Black Exodus of 1879'.

They first came from Kentucky, and then Tennessee and Mississippi

The sudden migration gave hope for a better life. Indeed, one of the most famous towns west of the Mississippi was incorporated by six African Americans.

The town was named after a legendary slave who had purchased his freedom - "Nicodemus".

In an attempt to see their settlement grow, the founders of Nicodemus fired off handbills grandly addressed to the "***Colored Citizens of the United States.***"

Shots of some old time farm / farmer and implements

Historians estimate that from 1870 to 1900 as many as forty thousand African Americans lived in Kansas working in the agriculture industry.

With the passing of years, a new industrial revolution continued to develop west of the Mississippi.

Train and Whistle

The railroad bi-passed some and created almost instant ghost towns. Others that were fortunate enough to have the tracks run through 'Main Street', boomed.

Pan of historic downtown Hoisington

One of the fortunate settlements was Hoisington.

The Missouri - Pacific Railroad had established a route that went through town - bringing with it the hope of good paying jobs working on the track.

Shot of workers on railroad track

Many African American families that had moved to Kansas earlier decided to move to Hoisington.... to search for employment with the Railroad.

Old photos

Approximately 20 African American families settled in the area known today as South Hoisington.

An early resident described how his family had moved to South Hoisington:

Man talking

....and my mother, she came from West Virginia with her father and mother. And my grandfather said they gave him a mule, a wagon and \$50.00 to get out of that state. I can't remember a lot of good things about South Hoisington, there just weren't many because we always wanted something better. In South Hoisington you just couldn't find or get anything better.

Woman talking

...and the flooding was bad. We'd say, OK, wonder what day were going to have the flooding this year. How long, how high will the water get before we have to get out. My brother would make us stay in the house. The house was so high that the water didn't come in, but all the other families had to leave. It was an experience I wouldn't put on my worst enemy.....living in South town.

South Hoisington was never incorporated, however the community grew and thrived in its early years. All the homes were maintained with pride..

Shots of old photos

Several businesses were established. A church was built and families sent their children to school in neighboring Hoisington.

Woman:

When we grew up we had to walk to school in the cold, white people on the bus would drive right by you, and black people walking, a mile to school and every thing, it was rough, it was hard.

Shot of dirt road

Unlike the community north of the tracks that developed paved streets and street lights, the streets in South Hoisington to this day... remain dirt.

Man:

It was below the tracks, I know a lot of you have heard of blacks living below the tracks and Hoisington was a railroad town and the railroad tracks separated up town from South Hoisington, and we weren't allowed to participate in up-town, we couldn't go to the restaurants or anything like that.

As the years passed, each generation graduated from high school and moved away.

Photo of old high school

Woman:

What I remember about South Hoisington, I remember the dirt roads, no street lights.. I do have some really good memories as far as growing up with my sister, but then I have a lot of bad memories. As far as South Hoisington, when I graduated in May of 1974, I left in 1974.

Shots of over grown area

But times were changing..... The railroad industry no longer needed as many laborers. Young adults moved to larger cities in search of higher education and employment.

The family members who stayed and worked on the railroad eventually retired and they also moved to neighboring cities..... Leaving homes unoccupied.

The last residents started to see another change in the area. Old city and town dumps were being closed in counties throughout Kansas.

Woman:

Being in contact with my grandmother and my mother and the going on's of South Hoisington, I would hear that people in up-town in Hoisington and surrounding areas would come and dump their trash and what have you because the place started to become vacant because there was literally no families occupying these houses or this area in South Hoisington so it literally became a dump site

VO:

The convenience of having a free and close place to dispose of solid waste was disappearing in most communities.

Eventually, all had moved away.

Ownership of the properties remained predominantly with the original land owners.

The homes were a reminder to all where they had come from, and the trials and tribulations that they and their fore fathers had endured.

Woman:

...that stone house torn down, I was trying to give it to the State of Kansas because it's history, I know the people that just to live there, Mr. and Mrs. Butler,Bonnie and Clyde, when they run em out of Oklahoma and stayed all night in that house with the Butlers. He had a lot of outlaws from Oklahoma stay over there.

VO:

With very few residents remaining, South Hoisington started to become an area where the illegal dumping of solid waste became commonplace.

More over grown areas

In the summer of 2003, the Bureau of Waste Management received an anonyms complaint of illegal dumping in South Hoisington.

Man on phone:

An inspection was conducted and the area was officially declared an Illegal Dump Site.

Man walking with clip board:

Local officials were aware of the dumping for many years but, like many communities, budgets were tight and the funds for a project this size was not available.

Man talking at desk:

There was this large area to the East side of the road that well over grown with trees and delapidated buildings and just tons and tons of junk.....

VO:

Meetings were held with Hoisington City officials and Barton County Commissioners to appraise them of the situation and options available to clean up the site.

Photos of meetings:

Bureau of Waste Management staff and local officials developed a comprehensive plan to clean up the entire area and in the spring of 2004, a plan was agreed upon by city, county and state officials to begin the work.

Meetings were held with landowners to explain the clean-up process and to receive approval to enter private properties.

Actual cleaning up shots

Actual clean up began in January of 2005 with the help of citizens from Hoisington.

A volunteer effort to remove waste tires from the area produced over 5,000 tires that were taken to a waste tire monofill..

In the next stage, the county removed the household hazardous waste from all properties in the areaproducing many large canisters of waste such as paints, solvents and oils.

Other stages of the clean-up included the removal of friable asbestos from structures, and the grinding of trees and brush into mulch by McPherson County.

The mulch was transported to an area for use in parks, and by local citizens.

Prisoners with chain saws

Prison labor was used to help in the recycling of trees and brush in the area.

A contractor was hired to remove unsafe structures, abandon vehicles, waste metal, appliances, industrial and residential waste from the entire area.

The area was then graded, re-sloped and re-seeded, returning the area to a safe, natural , and beautiful Kansas landscape.

The project was completed in early '2006' at a total cost of under \$400,000.00

It's estimated *that over* 3,268 tons - some 6.5 million pounds - of waste material was removed.

Discussions are under way discussing the future use of South Hoisington.

One idea is to establish a recreational area for visitors to the near by Cheyenne bottoms wildlife area. A campground and historical marker are being considered.

Man talking:

The success of this project resulted from the cooperative efforts of city, county and state officials.....and the many volunteers.

The people of Barton County can take pride in their achievement in cleaning up this historical area. Hello, I'm Rod Bremby, Secretary of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. The Illegal Dump Clean Up Program was created to ensure that places like South Hoisington can be restored.

Illegal dumps have been cleaned-up all across the state...

Each successful clean-up project improves our health and environment..... and appearance of our natural surroundings - encouraging community pride.

Woman using computer:

To find out more information on the program, contact the Kansas Department of Health and Environment's, Bureau of Waste Management.

You can go 'on-line' and link directly into the Bureau of Waste Management's Illegal Dump Clean Up Program.

Screen shot of website

There you will find a simple form that can be filled out and returned to the Bureau.

Anyone may nominate an area where Illegal Dumping has, or is, an ongoing problem.

Kansans can ensure their communities can stay clean through the efforts of its citizens today and for the future.

'Although the early settler's of South Hoisington are gone.....their legacy lives on, .. and a sense of pride remains.'

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